

**Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee Meeting #21**  
**February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at Purgatory Chasm State Park**  
**Meeting Summary Notes**

- **Administrative Updates**

**Bob O'Connor** - read the purpose and the legal composition of the OHV Advisory Committee in the enabling legislation to set in motion a discussion on the purpose and the membership of the Committee. There was a discussion on renewing the terms of the committee members with expired terms. New appointment letters from the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs would be needed for the renewals. (Follow-up required)

**Randy Toth** – suggested that the terms of the Committee members be staggered to preserve the institutional knowledge of the committee. He has a list on the tenure of the current committee members and he will be sharing it. Randy also corrected the meeting number from #20 to #21. *(Follow-up with Randy)*

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am.

**Bob O'Connor** - reviewed the financial statement of the OHV Fund which has a balance of approximately \$1.3 million.

He suggested the idea of hiring a full time State OHV staff to coordinate OHV activities and develop new riding opportunities.

The Committee discussed the funding mechanism for OHV Trust Funds and there was the need for the following follow-ups;

- **Capt. Merri Walker** - will look into the mechanism for moving court fines into the fund and also the possibility of how local fines may be moved to the fund. She can provide info on the date of court notification for the fine cases. *(Follow up with Merri)*
- Stephanie Cooper may have the update on the funds from the State Court. *(Follow-Up with Stephanie)*

- **DCR Update – Draft Berkshires Management Plan**

Paul Jahnige, introduced by Andy Beckman, presented the plan.

Highlights of the report

- There are currently over 100 miles of total trails for motorized and non-motorized uses at both October Mountain and Pittsfield Mountain state forests. Less than a third of the trails are for motorized vehicles like the OHVs. The goal is to get the trails for OHV users from 15 miles to 25

miles at the Pittsfield Mt. forest, and get the 20 mile to 30 miles at the October Mountain in 5 to 10 years. This goal can be achieved by reopening closed trails, extend loops and fixing dead end trails by making new connections.

- 16% of trails are currently in poor condition, especially the OHV trails.
- Public desires for improved maps and signage, trail repair, expanded parking and enhanced trail connections.

The release of a draft report for public comment will be around March. Public comments can be submitted via email.

### **Comments on the report**

- ATV groups need to organize into associations to seek the Recreational Trails Grant funding to repair or create trails. About \$1 million in funding is available per year with 20% match needed – this could be the OHV Funds and one third of funding must go to motorized uses. Investments in private land must have a 10-year commitment to keep the trail open.
- NETRA and other clubs would like to do trail work on DCR lands but volunteer policy is challenging to deal with. Clubs and DCR should meet to discuss streamlining volunteering – clubs used to provide 10-15,000 hours per year (Follow-up needed).
- Consider seasonal close-off of some public roads to create ATV riding opportunities
- Chapter 90B roads could provide OHV riding opportunities, especially for the 4X4 vehicles. This would require a change in legislation.
- There was a suggestion to form a sub-committee to work with a legal person to figure out the insurance requirements and law changes for using safe portions of public roads for riding opportunities, and on multi-use trails. (Follow-up needed)

- **Enforcement Updates**

Merri Walker – Summary on education– 27 classes were organized in 2015, awaiting the report on the mandatory snowmobile safety training.

There were 5 fatalities in 2015 and these fatalities were similar to past incidents. Fatalities of minors have been reduced in the past several years.

OHV Enforcement Operations – See report.

- **Child Safety Report – Katie Kearny**

Youth injuries are still occurring. Private property areas for riding need to comply with the law, and there is a need for awareness campaigns to promote safety. ATV clubs could incorporate registrations and safety training in their events.

**Jim Sherman** shared his positive experience of NETRA working with MEP to provide training and registration to their participants during their event – 52 youth completed the safety training at this event. Other clubs are considering the same approach at events.

- **Registrations**

Chris Bullet reported that permits are up by 8%, and there a suggestion for DCR to consider adopting seasonal pass model instead of the single permitting model.

MEP reported that 499 kids have taken the safety course in person since 2010 and additional 776 kids are in the process of taking the course online.

First time registration for the ATVs must be done in person but renewals can be done online. New registration portal is expected to up online on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016. It is still a challenge for out-of-state riders to register since they have to be in person. It would be helpful if OHV registration information was at the RMV offices.

- **Presentations**

David Gould of the town of Plymouth made a presentation on the town's interest in developing an OHV riding trail.

Sheryl Heller of the Friends Network brought the OHV Coordinator from Maine to present at the DCR Trails Conference and a panel discussed future possibilities for MA. Sharl would like to plan a statewide OHV conference sometime this year.

Russell Jennings and Amber Howard made a presentation on the Sunset City OHV area in Charlton, MA. The new private OHV riding and education facility is on 150 acres and is expected to open in fall 2017.

- **Attendee list**

First name	Last name	Organization	Contact Info (if not on email list)
Andy	Backman	DCR	
Major William	Bilott	MEP	
Chris	Bullet	DCR	
Mike	Case	DCR-WEST	
Thayer	Eastman	NETRA	
David	Gould	Plymouth DMEA	
Robert	Gubala	State Line ATV Riders	<a href="mailto:RJGubala@aol.com">RJGubala@aol.com</a>

Sharl	Heller	Friends Network	<a href="mailto:Slheller@comcast.net">Slheller@comcast.net</a>
Amber	Howard	Sunset City	
Paul	Jahnige	DCR	
Brent	Jellew	Sunset City	
Russell	Jennings	Sunset City	
Katre	Kearny	Safety Advocate	
Captain David	Loos	MEP	617-418-2034
Doug	McGray	MA Trail Riders	<a href="mailto:matrailridersevents@gmail.com">matrailridersevents@gmail.com</a>
Peto	Michaels	DCR	
Robert	O'Connor	EEA	
Emmanuel	Owusu	EEA	
Renee	Prunier	Sunset City	
Demenick	Sacca	DCR-WEST	<a href="mailto:demenick.sacco@state.ma.us">demenick.sacco@state.ma.us</a>
Jim	Sherman	Off Road/NETRA	
Michael	Toomey	Friends Network	
Randy	Toth	SAM	
Michael	Wade	MA DLR Association	
Capt. Merri	Waker	MEP	
Michael	White	Mohawk 4X4 Adventures & MABTAB	